

I am a medical doctor and a resident in training at the Yale Department of Psychiatry. I live in New Haven, CT and a large part of my training has taken place at CMHC. I am writing as I am appalled and saddened to hear about the proposed budget cuts to CMHC. The cut would cause a loss of 2.5 psychiatrists at CMHC. I have spent the past 6 months as the Psychiatrist on Duty at Acute Services at CMHC. We are the safety net for the poorest residents of New Haven, providing care and support in time of crisis when there's nowhere else to turn. We screen people that walk through our doors, treat them and connect them with services, including mental health services in the community. We also see people just discharged from the hospital, who often come in daily to receive their medication and other treatment. This allows them to stay out of the hospital and saves the State money. While we are supposed to keep people in Acute Services for only 6 weeks, the places we try to refer them to are increasingly overburdened and have months long waiting lists, because of lack of funding and hence staff, so we see patients for many months. The cuts are senseless and incredibly damaging. We save lives by providing immediate care to people who are suicidal and homicidal. The discussion after Sandy Hook focused on the need for mental health services to prevent future senseless tragedies. Please allow us to do our work and continue to serve the sickest and the vulnerable, which is the mission of CMHC.